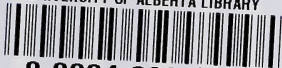


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HIV/AIDS EDUCATION IN SCHOOLS EVALUATION

SUMMARY REPORT

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HIV/AIDS EDUCATION IN SCHOOLS EVALUATION: SUMMARY REPORT

by

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for

Alberta Health

Edmonton, Alberta

December, 1991

Copies of:

*HIV/AIDS Education in Schools Evaluation:
Summary Report*

and the full report:

*HIV/AIDS Education in Schools Evaluation:
Research Report*

can be ordered, at no charge, from:

The Provincial AIDS Program
Alberta Health
7th floor, 10030 - 107 Street
Edmonton, Alberta
T5J 3E4
Phone (403) 427-0836
Fax (403) 422-0914



December 1991

An Open Letter to Readers:

The Acquired Immunodeficiency Syndrome, AIDS, will directly or indirectly affect the lives of all Albertans. The provincial government launched its program for the prevention, management and control of AIDS in October, 1987 by releasing its strategic plan, "Education and Caring: Alberta's Program for AIDS". Major strategies were identified and initiated to help control AIDS by preventing the spread of infection, in part through educational efforts to ensure that youth and adolescents have the knowledge that will enable them to choose healthy life-styles.

The Working Group on AIDS Education in Schools was established to provide advice and support for the inclusion of AIDS education within the junior and senior high comprehensive sexuality curriculum and to identify and provide resources to support this programming. The AIDS Education in Schools Evaluation was conducted in 1990/91 to assess the relative effectiveness of instructional strategies and resources being used in HIV infection/AIDS education in Grades 9 and 11.

This important Alberta project involved 128 junior and senior high schools from across the province.

The results of the study show that students support getting information about human sexuality, HIV infection/AIDS and sexually transmitted diseases from their schools and from their teachers.

The study will hopefully assist educators in providing information and resources to ensure that students fully understand this serious public health problem.

Alberta Health and Alberta Education are pleased with the continued co-operation in this important area.

Our appreciation and thanks are extended to students, teachers, principals and superintendents who participated in the evaluation project. The work is an important step in continuing to ensure that effective health education is being provided to young Albertans.

Nancy J. Betkowski
Minister of Health

Jim Dinning
Minister of Education



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Introduction

Adolescents face a significant risk of contracting Human Immunodeficiency Virus and the Acquired Immune Deficiency Syndrome (HIV/AIDS), and other Sexually Transmitted Diseases (STD); their levels of sexual activity and high risk behaviour have been documented in major reports. Therefore, it is important to provide students in Alberta schools with information about HIV/AIDS and STD.

The HIV/AIDS Education in Schools Evaluation, launched in 1988, assessed the effectiveness of different teaching methods and information booklets for students. The evaluation was based on measures of students' knowledge and attitudes, before and after HIV/AIDS instruction. Data were collected in the spring of 1990. The project, directed by Alberta Health and Alberta Education with representation from schools and community HIV/AIDS organizations, was funded by Alberta Health. This is the first study of its kind in Alberta or Canada.

The study surveyed students in 128 randomly selected schools from participating jurisdictions across the Province of Alberta. Students in **treatment** schools were surveyed before and after they received HIV/AIDS instruction. Students in **control** schools were surveyed at the same times, and after the second survey they received HIV/AIDS instruction.

The study involved 65 grade 9 classes and 51 grade 11 classes. From 2,800 to 3,200 students took part in the study. A total of 5,745 student questionnaires were analyzed. Both students and teachers completed questionnaires assessing their knowledge and attitudes about HIV/AIDS. Student information only is included in this report; teacher information will be provided in a future report.

Highlights

Highlights of the findings of the HIV/AIDS Education in Schools Evaluation are discussed on the following pages. The complete findings are included in the research report entitled *HIV/AIDS Education in Schools Evaluation: Research Report, Series Report: 1*.

Where do students get information on human sexuality, HIV/AIDS and STD?

The largest percentages (62 to 88%) of both grade 9 and grade 11 students said that the school was their main source of information on human sexuality, HIV/AIDS, and STD. The family was the second main source of information on human sexuality and television/radio was the second major source of information on HIV/AIDS. The second main source of information on STD was magazines/newspapers/books, closely followed by television/radio.

Where do students *prefer* to get information on human sexuality, HIV/AIDS and STD?

The largest percentages (45 to 64%) of students in both grades 9 and 11 **preferred to get** information on human sexuality, HIV/AIDS, and STD from the school. The second preferred source of information on human sexuality was the family and the second preferred source of information on HIV/AIDS and STD was health professionals (doctor/nurse/clinic).

Is a good job being done of giving students information about HIV/AIDS?

The largest percentages (85 to 98%) of students in both grades 9 and 11 said that the school was doing a fairly good to very good job of giving information about HIV/AIDS. A much lower percentage of students rated the other sources as doing a fairly good to very good job. The other sources (from highest to lowest ratings) were: TV/radio, magazines/papers/books, doctor/nurse/clinic, family, friends, and church/synagogue.

Does HIV/AIDS instruction make a difference?

For grade 9 classes, HIV/AIDS instruction led to a higher level of knowledge and more tolerant attitudes, but there was no statistical relationship to intentions about future behaviour. Grade 11 classes that received instruction had a higher level of knowledge, more tolerant attitudes and were more likely to report intentions of healthy sexual behaviour in the future.

What educational strategies have a significant effect on students' knowledge and attitudes?

Three methods of teaching HIV/AIDS information were assessed. These were instruction offered by: 1) a teacher in the classroom, 2) a guest in the classroom (e.g., health professional, person from community HIV/AIDS organization or person who has HIV), and 3) a teacher in "alternatives" to regular classroom activities (e.g., assembly in the gym for a presentation).

All three methods of HIV/AIDS instruction had significant effects on grade 9 and grade 11 students' knowledge and attitudes, but instruction by a teacher in the classroom consistently had the most significant effects. When the teacher added booklets, and/or audio-visual resources (films or videos), and/or guests, the effects on students' knowledge and attitudes were further increased.

How do the two print resources, *AIDS: What Young Adults Should Know* and *AIDS: The Choices and Chances*, affect students' knowledge and attitudes?

Use of *both* the resources significantly improved the HIV/AIDS-related knowledge and tolerant attitudes of students in both grade 9 and 11. *AIDS: What Young Adults Should Know*, as a single resource, was as effective as both resources with grade 9 students. For grade 11 students the use of both resources was most effective.

Recommendations

The following recommendations have been developed by the researchers based on the findings of the study.

Comprehensive Human Sexuality Education in Schools

HIV/AIDS and other STD will continue to be threats to young people's health in the foreseeable future. Students identified the school as their main source of information about human sexuality, HIV/AIDS, and other STD. This evaluation showed that HIV/AIDS instruction offered in the school does make a positive significant difference in students' knowledge and attitudes.

Recommendation 1.

Alberta schools continue to deliver the mandated comprehensive human sexuality program, including HIV/AIDS and other STD information.

HIV/AIDS Instruction by Classroom Teachers

HIV/AIDS instruction provided primarily by teachers during regular classroom instruction consistently had the most significant effects on students' knowledge and attitudes.

Recommendation 2.

HIV/AIDS instruction be provided by teachers during regular classroom instruction using a variety of supports including print resources, audio-visual resources, and/or guests.

Use of Print Resources with HIV/AIDS Instruction

The combination of HIV/AIDS instruction provided primarily by teachers during regular classroom activities with print resources had significant effects on students' knowledge and attitudes. In this study, either *AIDS: What Young Adults Should Know* or both *AIDS: What Young Adults Should Know* and *AIDS: The Choices and Chances* were effective for grade 9 students. For grade 11 students the use of both of the resources was most effective.

Recommendation 3.

Teachers support HIV/AIDS instruction with appropriate student print learning resources identified and approved by local school boards or Alberta Education.

Support for Human Sexuality, HIV/AIDS, and STD Education in Schools

The students' primary **actual** source for information about human sexuality, HIV/AIDS, and STD was the school. Their second **actual** source for information about human sexuality was the family, for information about HIV/AIDS it was TV/radio, and for STD it was magazines/papers/books.

The students' first **preferred** source for information about human sexuality, HIV/AIDS and other STD information was the school. The second **preferred** source for information about human sexuality was the family, and for HIV/AIDS and other STD information it was health professionals such as doctors and nurses.

Recommendation 4.

Alberta Health, Alberta Education, schools, and agencies responsible for human sexuality education acknowledge and support the role of the family in human sexuality education.

Alberta Health, Alberta Education, and agencies responsible for HIV/AIDS and other STD education acknowledge and support the partnerships of schools, health professionals, community HIV/AIDS organizations, and the media.

Future Reports

This study produced much more information than could be included in one report. The full report provides the key findings of the effects of HIV/AIDS education on students (including instructional strategies and print learning resources). This is a summary of the key findings that are presented in the full report *HIV/AIDS Education in Schools Evaluation: Research Report, Series Report: 1*.

Detailed papers on the remaining information will be prepared. Priority will be given to reporting the information that was collected from teachers.

Future Research

The results from this evaluation were important to many groups. Consequently, the study was directed by a team of representatives from various stakeholder groups: schools, health units, private consultants and community HIV/AIDS organizations as well as two government departments, Alberta Health and Alberta Education. This partnership framework ensured that there was active representation of the expertise of those concerned with the study. This approach is encouraged for future research involving a variety of stakeholders.

Researchers studying HIV/AIDS education in the schools in Alberta in the future are encouraged to assess the effects of HIV/AIDS education, including instructional strategies and student print learning resources, on adolescents' choice of healthy sexual behaviour.

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